

THE PACIFIC JOURNAL OF THEOLOGY

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The Pacific Journal of Theology

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MARCH 1964

From the Editor

It seems that the material for the double issue of the Journal which was to be provided by the Writer's Workshop which was held at Suva last year will arrive simultaneously with a batch of new articles for publication in the Journal, i.e., in the indefinite future. I am therefore using all the available material on hand for this ordinary issue of the Journal, which I am calling No. 10. I am leaving Nos. 8 & 9 (September and December 1963) in the hope that the workshop material will be available soon.

Pacific Theological College.

A consultation was called to further consider the establishment of the Pacific Theological College, and met in Suva, Fiji, on Feb. 1st and 3rd. We are printing below the message of this consultation to the churches.

At the time the consultation met, nine Pacific Churches had formally approved the Constitution and accepted the Financial Proposals, but Mr. Fullerton has just passed on to me the good news that the Anglican church in New Guinea has also accepted the proposals, and so the way is now open for the College Council to be convened. This is very good news indeed, and we are sorry that Mr. Fullerton will not be with us at the time of the first council meeting - he is leaving Fiji in June for the United States where he will study as a student - pastor at Union Theological Seminary, New York. His place as organising secretary will be taken by the Rev. C. H. T. Germon of Davuilevu, Fiji, and we extend to Mr. Germon our best wishes for this important task. We include also the other members of the Executive Committee. viz., the Chairman (Rt. Rev. J. C. Vockler). and Rev. S. A. Tuilovoni.

A Message to the Churches.

"To many of us it appears to be a long time since we started planning the Central Theological College and we are all eager to see the College built and opened. We have met before it is possible to call the College Council, since we have not yet received ten formal notices of assent to the Constitution. But we have good reason to believe that the tenth and eleventh Assents will be coming to hand this year. The plans we have

made are on the basis that these notices of Assent will be received this year and that the first Council will be called by September, 1964. We have therefore taken some practical steps to aid the Council, since we do represent the participating Churches and feel sure that we can speak on their behalf.

- (1) We have asked the Organizing Secretary to do all he can to obtain the **site** for the College at Veiuto. If this proves impossible, we have asked him to obtain a site at Tamavua near the Medical School.
- (2) We have realized that if the Council meets this year, then the earliest date for the **opening** of the College will be January, 1966. We have therefore instructed the Secretary to get **plans** drawn by the end of this year, so that the construction of the building may start early in 1965.
- (3) We have requested the first Council to appoint the **Principal and Bursar**, who will take office in 1965 to prepare for the academic year in 1966.
- (4) We feel that the appointment of **Principal** would be made more satisfactorily if the College Council issued an invitation to the person it considered most suitable, rather than by advertising the position.

In order to help the College Council make an appointment this year, we are asking each of the participating church groups, through their co-ordinators, to make two nominations for the position of Principal, before the 15th September, 1964.

- (5) We all want the Pacific Theological College to provide theological education of a high standard and plan to offer courses leading to the B.D. degree. However, we realize that theological training in the Pacific is at different stages of development and that Pacific churches need not only men with special qualifications, but also well trained pastors. We therefore have recommended to the Council that the College should offer **two main courses** :—

- (a) a course designed for pastors for which the entry standard would be passes in a minimum of three units of the L.Th. or an equivalent standard, and
- (b) a specialized course up to B.D. standard.

- (6) **Finances** : The Theological Education Fund has very generously offered a grant of 100,000 dollars towards the cost of establishing the College, on condition that we obtain 50,000 dollars from other sources. You will be glad to know that this 50,000 dollars has already been promised.

The amount of money we need for the actual running costs of the College is not yet assured.

The churches that have answered our invitations have agreed to contribute generously, according to their resources. Others of you will no doubt also offer to make annual contributions towards the running costs of the College. However we have realized that we must take steps to find, outside the Pacific, some financial assistance towards the annual costs. We are also exploring the possibility of establishing scholarships, lest the burden of paying fees prevent some churches from sending students to the College.

- (7) We have recommended to the College Council that provided the primary function of the College (i.e. full time training for the ordained ministry) is being fulfilled and not interfered with, the College should offer help to the Pacific churches, through **associated courses**, such as the training of missionaries; an institute of Christian education; a lay training centre; courses in the French language, etc.
- (8) We have given very careful thought as to the best way of taking the steps that now need to be taken before the first College Council meets. You will be very glad to know that the following persons have agreed to serve as an **Executive Committee**: The Rt. Revd. J. C. Vockler (Chairman), Revd. S. A. Tuilovoni; Revd. C. H. T. Germon; Revd. L. D. Fullerton; with power to co-opt. Mr. Germon will become the Hon. Organizing Secretary of the College in June of this year.
- (9) We hope that these actions will receive your support and that they will demonstrate the enthusiasm we all feel for this project. Even though preparations are lengthy, we are convinced of the need to open the College as soon as possible. We are grateful for all the encouragement and support we have received. We ask for your continued interest, your suggestions and your prayers."

The Revision of the New Testament in the Ponapean Language

by Harold F. Hanlin

Ponape, Caroline Islands

With encouragement and advice from the American Bible Society, I have been working with a revision committee of indigenous informants who represent four language groups of this area: Trukese, Ponapean, Kusaie, and Nukuoron. The languages of Truk and Ponape have much in common, and the language of Kusaie has several elements which are closely related to the languages of Truk, Ponape, and the Marshall Islands. But the language of Nukuoro is a Polynesian language, and similarities have been pointed out to me between it and the languages of Samoa and Hawaii — I have not yet found any elements which it has in common with the three Micronesian languages just mentioned.

Our committee has used the language of Ponape for its discussion of the verses under consideration, and after explanations, discussion, and agreement on a good Ponapean rendering, the non-Ponapean members of the committee then write the material in their respective languages. Of course, this gives us just a first draft in each language — before the material is ready for publication it must be worked over and improved by my conferring not only with the informants who helped produce it but also with others who may be available.

Since I had started on a revision of the Trukese language a few years before coming to Ponape and organizing this Revision Committee, we completed the work in that language first. I then spent several months at Truk, at different times as I could get away from my work here, getting our Trukese materials ready for publication with the help of four of the ordained ministers of that area. This book has just been printed by the American Bible Society and is now ready for distribution and use among the Trukese-speaking congregations of our church here in the Caroline Islands.

I am now in the process of checking and "polishing up" the material which our committee has produced thus far in the language of Ponape. Since I am not able to devote all my time to this linguistic work, it does not move along very rapidly. In this paper, I shall mention and comment on some matters which may be of general interest which I have encountered in working

on the Ponapean New Testament — the examples which I cite will be taken only from the Gospel of Matthew. We have followed the Revised Standard Version of the New Testament more closely than any other English translation, but at all points we have sought for as much help from the Greek Testament as my ability to work with it can supply.

The translation which is now being used here was made by a German missionary of the Liebenzell Society in 1935, when these islands were controlled by Japan. It is a revision of material which had been written by former missionaries, material which has not been accessible to us. From what I have been told, I understand that the 1935 revision was made under very difficult circumstances, in which the missionary had to work too hurriedly and without an adequate number of informants. The proper nouns usually appear in the German pronunciation as adapted to the Ponapean orthography then in use. Since World War II, there have been no missionaries from Germany or Japan working here at Ponape, and there has been quite an upheaval in the matter of an orthography for this language. Indigenous leaders of the Ponapean Church requested that a revision be made which would use an adaptation of the English pronunciation of proper nouns, and which would be written in a more "modern" orthography.

So, in the matter of names, the new revision will have John instead of Johanes, James instead of Jakobus, Matthew instead of Mattheus, Christ instead of Christus, Paul instead of Paulus, etc. But the matter of the orthography is not so simple.

Unfortunately, not enough material has been written and published in the Ponapean language to "standardize" an orthography which is acceptable to all the people who use it — so my own work has been made more difficult by the present confusion in the way Ponapean words are being written. Linguists, anthropologists, educators, and missionaries have made different suggestions at different times on this matter. And at present no one is consistently following any orthography that has been proposed, and no sustained serious attempt has been made to bring real order out of this confusion. One large factor in the problem is the fact that there are two different dominant types of pronunciation in use by the people of Ponape, with minor variations in smaller communities. When one asks an indigenous person any question concerning orthography, he usually gets that person's attempt to spell a word the way **he** pronounces it. I am striving to use an orthography which I believe will

be intelligible to the majority of those who will read this book, and which is an improvement over the orthography employed in the 1935 revision, but which may itself need to be revised at some time in the future.

In addition to these two general matters, the pronunciation of proper nouns, and the orthography, we have had other types of problems to face in working with this language. The Ponapean language in the past used many honorific terms and phrases, and although the use of such honorific terminology is decreasing, it is still considered important by the informants with whom I have worked. As an experiment, we actually wrote one Gospel without using any honorific terms; but my informants were unanimous in saying that such writing would not be considered to be in good Ponapean style. Hence we re-wrote that material

Our revision will have less of this sort of thing than did the 1935 revision — but we have been continually faced with the problem of “what rank does the person have who is being addressed or referred to in this passage?” and “to what extent should we employ honorific terms instead of those used for common people?” We have attempted to avoid an excessive use of these honorific terms, but have used them where my informants have thought it necessary in order to conform with their understanding of what constitutes good style in writing the Scripture in their language. This approach has resulted in our agreement to eliminate entirely a few honorific terms, and in a considerable reduction in the number of instances where other such terms will appear.

The Ponapean language does not make a clear distinction between past time and completed or “perfective” action — the same suffix serves to express both ideas but seems to be used most consistently for the latter idea. Since this distinction is not made in the language, it has often been difficult to explain it to my informants, with the result that I’m afraid there will be some inconsistency in our use of this suffix, even though I have tried to leave the matter up to the judgement of my informants. But, on this point, and on many others, the indigenous ideas of courtesy and respect for a “foreign missionary” have too often caused my informants to accept something which I have proposed without actually correcting me on some of the finer points of Ponapean literary style. I feel that this has been especially true in the matter of word order at times.

The Ponapean language has a "dual" form for personal pronouns, and we have had to be careful to use it properly in such passages as Mt. 4: 18-22; 20: 20-24 and 29-34, for instance. This language, as do other Micronesian language, has two forms for the personal pronoun in the first person plural, the so-called "inclusive" and "exclusive" forms. So we have had to be careful to observe whether the person or persons spoken to are to be included with, or excluded from, the speaker and his companion. This is not usually a difficult question, if one whose native language does not make this distinction can remember to keep it in mind, and use the "exclusive" form in such a verse as Mt. 7: 22, or 8: 29 and 31. But we did have a bit of discussion about Mt. 8: 25 — since the disciples addressed Jesus as "Lord," my informants were inclined to think that only they, and not Jesus, were in danger. We finally agreed that probably in their fear they would not be making this distinction, but would be crying out about the danger which all in the boat were facing; so here we will have the "inclusive" form.

There are two interesting prefixes in this language: 'ton-' and 'soun-'. Both refer to people and are prefixed to action words to refer to the people who perform the action indicated; but the former prefix is properly used of a person who may do this action in an ordinary, unskilled way, whereas the latter prefix refers to an expert," well-trained in the proper and best ways to perform a given activity. The Ponape word 'padak' means both to "learn" and to "teach," so a pupil is a 'ton-panak.' while a teacher is a 'soun-padak.' Hence the Ponape word for "disciple" is 'ton-padak,' while Jesus himself is often addressed, or referred to, as a 'soun-padak.' John the Baptist is 'Jon Sound - papdais.' The Ponape word for "write" is 'inting,' hence a "scribe" is a 'soun-inting.' The Ponape word for "fight" is 'pei,' a person who gets into a brawl could be described as a 'ton-pei,' but the soldiers who arrested Jesus are 'soun-pei.'

Since the Ponapean language does not have a set of passive forms for its verbs, we have had to decide whether, in a given instance, we could find an acceptable Ponapean word which would express the passive idea, or should recast the sentence so as to use an active verb and, if necessary, supply a definite subject for it. In some cases, my informants have said that the context would make a sentence clear enough in this respect even though an "active" verb form would appear. For instance,

in Mt. 11: 23, we have used an active verb for the ideas expressed in English by "be exalted" and "be brought down," where these verbs have Capernaum as their "subject" and nothing as their "object"; but we have recast the latter part of that verse so that it reads in Ponape, 'For if I had done the mighty works in Sodom which I did in you, it would have remained' Of course, we also used this "active" construction in vs. 21, where we faced also another problem of an entirely different kind — how should we translate "sackcloth" into Ponapean? After considering several possibilities, we decided to use a phrase which means 'clothing worn as a sign of sadness,' instead of the phrase used in 1935 which refers to old, wornout, or cast-off clothing, which might be worn by Ponapeans for various reasons, none of which would suggest sadness or repentance. In Mt. 10: 26 we have used Ponapean words which are passive enough in meaning, though not in form, to express in this context the ideas "is covered," "be revealed," "hidden," and "be known."

We have often had difficulty with verses which employ various kinds of figurative language, because figures of speech which may be very meaningful in one language may have little or no meaning in a different language. For instance, the literal translation of the beatitude in Mt. 5: 6 is merely puzzling to a Ponapean, who knows very well what it means to be hungry or thirsty, but who does not understand the use of these ideas with "righteousness" instead of food and drink. The 1935 revision reads something like 'Blessed are they who want to eat and drink what is right,' Our committee has written, 'Blessed are those who feel hunger and thirst in respect to things that are right.' We have translated Mt. 10: 34 fairly literally, as did the 1935 version, but we realize that this verse will need rather careful explanation by any teacher or preacher who may wish to use it. We felt it best, for the sake of clarity to render Mt. 15: 24 as 'I was sent only to the Israelites, who are like lost sheep.' On the other hand, to describe the boat in Mt. 14: 24 as 'jumping about' in the waves is quite picturesque and meaningful in this language.

The Ponapean language has different words which refer to various aspects of the meaning of "judge" and "judgement," and no one set of terms which covers the whole range of meanings of these words. So, for the sake of clarity, we have

had to decide what aspect of these more general ideas is uppermost in a given verse and use the Ponapean word which best expresses that more particular idea. In Mt. 5: 21, "judgement" is a severe questioning to ascertain one's guilt or innocence,' and in 5: 25, the "judge" is 'an expert in making things right.' In Mt. 7: 1, "judge not" is 'do not habitually think bad thoughts' about the conduct of others. In Mt. 19: 28, it seemed best to us to follow the suggestion of one of our lexicons and write, 'you shall sit on twelve thrones and rule the twelve tribes of Israel.'

In this, and other Micronesian languages, there is no one term for "parents," so in Mt. 10: 21, we must write 'Children will oppose their fathers and mothers.' Also, these people do not think of **a father or the father, a son, or the son** — they always think of somebody's father or somebody's son. Hence, we recognize that our literal rendering of such a verse as the latter part of Mt. 11: 27 is not such as Ponapeans would normally speak, yet we have not discovered any other way which would be more acceptable.

Some of the more difficult verses for us in Matthew's Gospel are: 11: 12, where the best we could do reads, 'From the time of John the Baptist until now, people have made it hard for the kingdom of heaven, and those who made it hard for the kingdom want to enter it by their own strength.'

12: 20c, which we have rendered, 'until he shall truly bring justice into reality,' since the abstract idea of "victory" or "triumph" seems foreign to the Ponapean way of thinking.

12: 33, 'You should say that a tree is good and that its fruit is also bad, for a tree is found out through its fruit.'

12: 37, 'For your words will reveal your rightness or your not-rightness.'

12: 41 and 42, where the men of Ninevah and the queen of the South 'show up the not-rightness of this generation.'

13: 12, which gave us a real struggle, and we could do no better than 'For he will give to anyone who has something, that he may have more; but he will take away whatever may be with anyone who has nothing.'

The Ponapeans have an expression in common use which equivalent to our "Thank you," but it is used only in addressing another person in order to express one's gratitude to him; it cannot be adapted for use in such phrases as "be thankful," or "give thanks" for something. In these latter instances (Mt. 15: 36 for example), we have had to use the Ponapean expressions for "praise," in one form or another.

The Ponapeans, along with other Micronesians, "borrow" things freely, but apparently feel little or no obligation to return what they have borrowed. Hence we have had difficulty with any expression concerning indebtedness. In the Lord's Prayer, Mt. 6: 9-13, it has seemed best for us to follow the lead of earlier translators who wrote, 'Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us.' And in the explanatory verses which follow that prayer, we have rendered "transgressions" by a phrase which means 'to do something which is not right.'

The Ponapean word for "right hand," or "on the right hand," is the 'side of war,' and for "left hand," the 'side of honour.' Hence the parable of Mt. 25: 31ff doesn't fit into the Ponapean scheme of things when the "goats" are seated on the 'side of honor,' but we have found no better way of translating this verse.

The Ponapeans know little about the blowing of trumpets and the use of various foreign musical instruments; but they do produce a far-carrying sound by blowing on a certain type of large sea shell. Their expression for this therefore was used in Mt. 6: 2.

There are three words for 'worship' in fairly common use among the people of Ponape: an older one which means worshipful respect as shown more or less informally by an individual or a small group as an expression of reverence for deity, a newer word which is used for more formal worship ceremonies, and a rather common word which seems to be acceptable for this meaning in conversation but not in writing. We have used the older word in Mt. 2: 1-12 for instance, but the expression for the temple is 'house of formal worship ceremonies.'

Of course, we have used Ponapean adaptations of many English words which the people here have been using since there were no corresponding words in their own language. There is a flower here which is something like a lily, but it is not very beautiful. Hence my informants preferred to introduce their adaptation of our word "lily" in Mt. 6: 28-29. Since the Ponapean people have not until quite recently used anything like our "oven," and since they do not speak of "grass" as "living" or "dead," we have written in Mt. 6: 30, 'the grass which is in the field today and which will be thrown into the fire tomorrow.'

The closest Ponapean approximation in sound to some English words, "pig" and "book" for example, are Ponapean words which have an entirely different meaning of their own.

Hence, here the Ponapeans have introduced a variation in pronunciation for the words they use to refer to those foreign objects.

We have rendered the phrase "first day of the week" as literally as we can in Ponapean, but the Ponapean names for the days of the week, introduced apparently by our missionary predecessors, actually designate Monday as the 'first' day, Tuesday as the 'second' day, etc. Here Saturday is the 'day of preparation,' and Sunday is the 'holy day.' This has caused us to retain the former translators' adaptation of "Sabbath" for the Jewish day of worship; but here again in some areas the people have been calling Sunday the "Sabbath," so considerable explanation will have to be given by preachers and teachers concerning the days of the week mentioned in the Scriptures.

We have decided to abandon the literal translation of exact expressions for time of day which the early translators had used, and to write '12 o'clock' for 'the sixth hour,' and 'three o'clock' for 'the ninth hour,' etc.

For the words "unleavened bread," we have had to use a rather cumbersome phrase, 'bread which has no yeast in it.' Our older version used a phrase, 'the outsiders,' to refer to the "Gentiles" of the Scriptures. This expression is now used here at Ponape to refer to non-Christians, and is not used for non-Jews (a distinction which they have little occasion to make); so we are going to introduce the Ponapean adaptation of the word "Gentile" in our revision. The earlier translators merely transliterated the word "proselyte," and we shall do the same.

An interesting Ponapean adaptation may be noted here. Since they have their own word for a man who is a king, they have used the English word "king" to mean a rooster, so we will use this word in Mt. 26: 34 etc.

This work of revising the Ponapean New Testament is interrupted from time to time by my absences from Ponape, and by other duties when I am here; hence it cannot be said just now when our revision will be ready for publication. But eventually we hope to have it in the hands of our people here and on the outlying atolls where many of the people use Ponapean in addition to their own dialect.

"Agreeable to the Word"

by J. C. Cohen, Samoa.

The story of the Church in Samoa is one that has struck the imagination and kindled the interest of many people in the Congregational Churches throughout the world. Right from the momentous occasion in 1830 when John Williams landed in the island of Savai'i and was offered the patronage of High Chief Malietoa, the story was one of seeming success. Within 25 years, the Bible had become the first book to be translated and written down in the Samoan tongue, local pastors were being trained in the school at Malua, village congregations under the leadership and instruction of their own pastors were growing in numbers all over the three main islands, and already missionaries were devoting their labours to the supervision and training of the ministry.

During the next 40 years, although growth in the Church was less dramatic than in the earlier years, progress towards the evangelization of the whole people was still rapid. This progress in the development of the Church must be seen against the background of fierce inter-tribal warfare, straining the loyalty and integrity of those newly-won sometimes beyond measure. Yet it is to the credit of the Church that it saw great inconsistency between warfare and the Gospel. European trading interests entering the country at this time often added to the difficulties facing the Church, manifesting those very failings which it was the aim of the Church to eradicate. Nevertheless, the local ministry had gained such influence, and was accorded such confidence by missionaries and people alike, that it readily formed the nucleus of a General Assembly. By 1895, the local congregations were sending deacons, chosen from among those of chiefly status, to share with the pastors in the growing responsibility and authority of this Assembly.

Whether it was from some uncomfortable experience of the vagaries of large assemblies, or from some desire to assimilate respect for age in-to the structure of the Church, we do not know. However, in 1906, the Church made a decisive change in its pattern of life. As missionaries withdrew from direct participation in the village ministry, senior pastors were chosen

to give oversight and counsel to their brethren in the Sub-District. These Elder Pastors, although continuing in their village pastorates, met together regularly and, in 1906, constituted a Court of Elders. This body, while it has mostly confined its deliberations to matters directly concerned with the ministry in the Church and with discipline, it has gained great influence and prestige from its mature judgement and sober handling of its affairs.

From 1918, the Church founded by God through the agency of the Society gradually assumed greater responsibilities. Sometimes tardily, always warily, the Church advanced to the now suspect dream of self-support, self-government and self-propagation. Practically self-supporting since the early 'twenties', self-governing since the early 'forties', and self-propagating from the closing decades of the last century, the Church in Samoa appeared to stand a shining example of enlightened 'missionary' policy and laudable local initiative. Unfortunately, the truth of the situation has been far more sombre. The skeleton had been built up and there was the flesh of solid achievement but it seemed as if the life were draining away. The Church had become a stable institution, interlocking with Samoan society and custom, rather than the active, living organism, directed by the Spirit.

Before analysing this fall from grace, it is necessary to look at various factors determining the growth and pattern of development of the Church in Samoa. Although the Church has recently adopted the name of the Congregational Christian Church in Samoa, it will be seen that it is not strictly 'congregational' in doctrine or polity. Missionaries came to Samoa from various countries and various persuasions. Inevitably, these early missionaries had a very great influence, directly and indirectly, in the fashioning of a pattern of Church order. The Fundamental Principle of the Society was conceived by those who were convinced that, "the union of Christians of various denominations in carrying on this great work (to send the glorious Gospel of the blessed God to the heathen) is a most desirable object." These men were even more convinced that it ought to be left to the minds of the persons whom God might call into the fellowship of His Son to assume for themselves such form of Church Government as to them should appear most agreeable to the Word of God. However scrupulously the missionaries might try to carry out this Principle, it would seem scarcely credible that they could refrain from giving guidance

in these matters. Neither would it seem credible that the embryo - Church in Samoa would not naturally turn to its missionaries and lean heavily on their ability to give some visible shape to the Body of Christ. The Fundamental Principle, as originally conceived, safeguarded against the export of any one system of Church government but raised illusory hopes of the export of none. It falsely distinguished between the sending of the Gospel and the fashioning of the visible Body. At its best, it was idealistic and unreal to experience; at its worst, it was the glib, almost heretical, assumption that the 'shape' of the visible Body would be self-chosen if not self-made.

Almost accidentally, the Church in Samoa has aspects of all three main forms of Church government. As the historians of the Society have commented, this was less the result of consecrated searching by the Church for that 'form' most agreeable to the Word, than the welding together of features amenable to Samoan custom and those which were favoured by influential missionaries. Perhaps the tragic error was a too-optimistic belief in the degree of maturity attained by a new out-crop of Christ's Church, by which only could it deliberately and devoutly seek of the Lord His will for His Body.

Whilst barely respectable theologically as it stands, the Fundamental Principle has maintained, within all the constitution-making of the Church in Samoa, the element of a transcendent authority over and above the Church. The Church is called into being by the Word; its task is to proclaim the Word by preaching, sacrament and fellowship; ultimately it must submit its life, teaching and constitution to the judgement of the Word. This must call forth from the Church that continual, even constant, activity demanded by the Reformation - transformation and renewal. It may well be that this is what we are experiencing now. Since 1952, when the Church in Samoa set up a Commission to enquire into the life and work of the Church, there has been considerable thought of these matters. The results of the Commission are hard to judge. It began in a mood of deep and penitent humility, with a real desire for renewal, but it has dragged out the publication of its Report and gradually lost momentum. However, we have had two revisions of the Constitution of the Church (in 1956 and 1960), we have had a Statement of Doctrine published (in 1957) together with Commentaries on some of its Articles and throughout we have had deep discussion in Assembly on matters of faith and practice.

In addition, we have been more ready of late to experiment in youth and Sunday-school work, in Bible Schools and Pastor Refresher Courses. Perhaps the great interest shown by the Church in a proposed new revision of the Samoan Bible indicates that there is a very real desire to hear what the Word is saying to our situation.

However hopeful the signs of a renewal in the life and structure of the Church in Samoa agreeable to the Word, we must not lose sight of those essential marks of the Body of Christ which we find in the New Testament. Unless our renewal is the clearer manifestation of these marks within the Body, it is not agreeable to the word. Unless, for example, the Church is growing more conscious of the importance of the unity, the proclamation and the fellowship of the Body of Christ, it is not yet being truly obedient to the Word. Therefore let us glance briefly at the imprint of these marks in the life and witness of the Church in Samoa.

Firstly, there is the unity of the Church. Our Gospel is the good news of God reconciling the world to Himself. We are bound together in Christ as those who are reconciled to God and to each other. The Body of the reconciled can acknowledge no division within it as being agreeable to the Word. It recognizes that such divisions as exist are sinful. Therefore, the Congregational Christian Church in Samoa has welcomed its membership of the World Council of Churches and hopes to have closer association with other Churches of similar Order through the International Congregational Council. Yet the Word must speak of things near as well as far, of things internal as well as external. Here, in Samoa, there are other traditions of the Christian Church together with certain dissident groups, and as yet the love of Christ and of the unity of His Body has not rid us of pride and self-assertion among our brethren. Even within our Church itself, the reconciling Word has not yet overcome the suspicion which lurks between ministers and deacons, between 'missionary' and 'national', even between one member and another. The unity of the Body of Christ which is agreeable to the Word is not always evident in our midst. The Lordship of Him who is the Head of the Body is acknowledged in the Church but not always is His rule sought or His will done.

The Church is God's People charged with a mission. Proclamation of the mighty acts of God in Christ, leading to incorporation of believers within the Body, has always been an

essential mark of the Church. Not just in preaching and teaching, but in the Sacraments and in fellowship, is the glorious Gospel of the Blessed God proclaimed. We must confess that often the Gospel we have preached in Samoa has been a partial gospel, moulded by local custom imported partisanship. Often the cutting edge of the Word has been blunted, making it comfortable and without effect. For the same reason, our neglect of the Sacraments has led to a diluted worship and a faulty theology.

In fellowship too there has been a failure to submit it completely to the judgement of the Word. Too often 'fellowship' has been confused with friendliness, race or denominational solidarity; too often based on Samoan toleration than on Christian love. Fellowship is only beginning to be experienced in all its painful, challenging implications. Now the Church is learning of that fellowship which must mark the Church in all its gatherings — the sharing of burdens as well as the singing of hymns, the reforming of life as well as the encouragement of the Saints. Most of all, the Church in Samoa is learning that the Christian Society is distinguishable from the Samoan society in that it shows forth to the world that bond of relationship which is between Father, Son and Holy Ghost, between Him, who is our Lord, and us who are His servants, between our brother, 'for whom Christ died', and us, who are 'bought with a price', that bond, which is chief of all virtues and all grace, even love.

We have looked at the founding, the growth and the life of the Church in Samoa. We have found often that in the past it has relied on the traditions of men rather than on the Word of God. We have faulted its structure and life in many ways and yet we have become aware of its new mood of self-criticism and examination. The Congregational Christian Church in Samoa is awakening to a new consciousness of itself and of the Word of God, by which it is created and sustained. The Bible is breaking free from its deadening cloak of familiarity and is being re-discovered as the ground of God's living, relevant Word. (This article has already been published in the L. M. S. Chronicle, and is reprinted by permission)

“The Church and its Present Situation”

by Shem P. Jimmy, Caroline Islands.

The founding of the church in Ponape

As one of the members of the church of Ponape Island, I would like to describe briefly the history of the church in this island. Unfortunately only a few people seem to take an interest in the history of the island and the story of the growth of the church, and there are no written records of the early days of the church. The only historical information we possess are the traditions that have been handed on from person to person.

In the early days the island was ruled by two kings, of these the more important was the Madolonimu King, and the gospel was first preached in the territory which he ruled. In those days the inhabitants of the island worshipped spirits and clan gods and were required to honour and respect the High King who was living in Madolonimu — perhaps the people regarded him as divine.

In 1852 the first missionaries came to Ponape - these were missionaries from the United States and Hawai and they travelled in the “Morning Star” from Honolulu. They included the Revs. White, Doon, and Gray. The gospel was preached first at Temwen and this became the centre of mission work on Ponape, although after some time another centre was Ron Kitt. The early missionaries faced opposition from the King and some were ill-treated. Some returned eventually to their own country, but others died at Ponape. Possibly the unhappy memories in the mind of the Ponapean people of the cruelty of white traders and the way in which they had exploited the people made the work of the white missionaries very difficult. There were a few early conversions and services were held in the houses of converts. At this stage there were of course no church buildings in Ponape.

King Solomon was a strong opponent of the early missionaries and their work. He persecuted those who seemed to be influenced by the work of the missionaries, but the usual pattern of Church History in the Pacific Islands is found in Ponape also - the King was converted to Christianity and changed his name to Paul. This was followed by the mass conversion of

the island the King being just as zealous in persecuting those who were slow to believe, as he had been formerly towards those who were being won to the church. The faith of most of the new converts was rather nominal and the process of instruction to make the faith more real to the people, was of course, a very long one. During this period the mission centre was transferred from Temwen (Salong) to Ohwa, where a school was established, and there was another school at Ron Kitti. Ohwa became the centre of education for the children of the island. The language was reduced to writing, and parts of the Bible were translated.

At Ohwa the subjects were taught in the Ponapean language and the missionary work went on until 1899 when German missionaries took over the work.

German and Japanese missionaries.

The German missionaries worked in the island without changing much of the previously established pattern of missionary work. Some local people were also helping in the work of the church - some of these later became pastors, and were sent to carry the gospel to other islands in the group.

At this time the local pastors together with the missionaries worked out some laws of the church. These dealt mainly with rules and prohibitions which church members must obey. The life of the church followed a legal pattern and people were afraid to question what the missionaries said. Every activity of the church was in the hands of the missionaries.

The German missionaries were working in the school, but little time was used in developing the life of the church.

Some of the missionaries with the help of the local pastors worked at the translation of the Bible. Not only this, but hymns were also composed and taught. The translation work was built on the foundation laid down by the early American missionaries. The whole of the New Testament was translated and also some of the Old Testament stories.

In 1914 the German missionaries were asked by the government to return home. In 1922 the work was taken over by Japanese missionaries, and there seemed to be real progress in the life of the church. Sunday Schools were established and there was a greater emphasis on education. Ohwa became the training centre of the mission. Pastors were trained there and some of the graduates were sent to Japan for further training.

A girls' school was established at Kolonia and some of its graduates went to Japan and Kusaie for further training in women's work. Indigenous pastors were serving the church but were paid by the Japanese mission. The mission schools were limited in standard and also in the number of students - the schools were financed entirely by the mission.

Although indigenous pastors were ordained in those years the authority of the church was entirely in the hands of the Japanese missionaries. In 1938 the island became closed to the rest of the world. The Japanese missionaries were asked to leave and the work of the church was left in the hands of the indigenous pastors. These had not been prepared for such a responsibility and were at a loss to know what to do - the life of the church was at a low level.

Hardship and Trial.

When the war broke out in 1942 the pastors were ordered by the government officials not to conduct any services or to arrange church gatherings. From 1942 to 1945 the church buildings were used by military forces as camping places. There were no church services, no great annual gatherings (which used to take place on November 25th) and no Sunday School classes. All these things were prohibited by the Japanese. However there were church services in private houses and even in caves, although the services were not well organised. Attendance was also made difficult because Sunday was regarded as a normal working day.

After the war — the coming of the American Missionaries.

The war ended in 1945 and the United States took over the control of the island. In 1947 a mission school was established with the help of the American Board for Foreign Missions and the Hawaiian Evangelical Mission. As the number of students increased the mission eventually handed the school over to the government — this was the first government school on the island. In 1952 there were 5 mission elementary schools on the island, and it was during this year that the first missionary minister was appointed to the island — Dr. Chester Terpstra who was stationed at Ohwa.

Scriptures and hymn books became available — the scriptures were the New Testament and the Psalms. Trained workers were sent out to help in the Sunday Schools and also in the mission elementary schools. Later on these 5 schools were also handed over to the government.

Some church members were elected to receive Sunday School training in order to become Sunday School teachers, but there was no committee set up to deal with Church affairs. There was no church constitution and the church was ruled by the missionaries and local pastors. At this time there were five ordained pastors and about ten lay-preachers.

Pastor Training

Due to the rapid change in the life of the church there was a great need to train young men for the ministry. In 1957 a school was built called the Pastor Teachers' Training School. The aim of this school is to train young men for the ministry as well as training teachers for the mission schools. This school is supported by the American Board for Foreign Missions and the Hawaiian Evangelical Mission. It opened with twenty five students representing the four main island groups in Micronesia. This school will have a very important part to play in the life of the Micronesian churches. In 1960 three students were sent to Honolulu to receive further training, and since that year graduates have been sent each year to Honolulu.

Present Situation.

The missionaries are working to encourage the indigenous pastors to undertake greater responsibilities in the Church. Many members of the church still regard the church as something that belongs to the missionaries, rather than a church which is truly indigenous. But new ideas and movements are slowly beginning to take effect.

In the Sunday Schools more people are being trained for the work of teaching. A Sunday School committee prepares the lessons which are translated into the vernacular. Sunday School teachers are brought together from time to time for about a fortnight to receive guidance about the forthcoming lessons. Pictures and visual aids are also prepared.

Young people's groups have also been established in many villages. These seek to attract young people and to gain their interest, and further seek to train young people in leadership.

Bible Study groups also operate among students, both in the High School and Intermediate School.

Some of the Ministers were ordinary church members who were elected as deacons, and after becoming lay preachers were eventually ordained as full time pastors. Others received training to prepare them for the ministry and were then ordained.

The ministers are not paid by the church or by their own Congregations. They have to look after their own families in their own villages. Sometimes they earn their living by fishing, but mostly by the use of their own land. Most of their time is taken up with gardening etc. and so there is little time left for pastoral work. This is a real problem in the church in Ponape. Some of the difficulty lies in the minister serving in his own village. In the last few years ministers have been given the opportunity to exchange with other ministers twice a year - when a minister lives away from his own village he receives much more help than in his own village, and so has much more time to be the pastor of the people.

Refresher courses for ministers are held once a year. Missionaries and local ministers who have received overseas training are usually in charge. In these courses the ministers discuss among themselves the problems of their own churches and also the way in which the church should develop.

In 1961 a committee was set up to prepare a constitution for the church, and in 1963 the constitution was presented to ministers and church members for consideration. It is the hope of the church that the acceptance of a constitution will be a step forward in the way in which the Holy Spirit is leading the Christian Church in Ponape in these days.

Youth Bible Study Groups in Niue

by Pitasoni Tanaki, Niue

The organisation of Bible Study Groups for young people is a fairly new thing in Niue - it is only during the last two or three years that young people have been studying together in this way. Many of these young people find it hard to attend these groups as they have had to face opposition from their parents and lack of sympathy as far as many church leaders are concerned. In some villages the pastors and deacons have actively opposed the groups because they believe that the young people are interfering with the old tradition of the church by seeking to introduce many new things.

In the beginning a small group of young people met weekly in the Niuean L.M.S. Centennial Hall, but as the number grew the young people sought to form groups in their own villages. In villages where the pastor's reaction was favourable the group would often meet in the pastor's house. The village meeting takes place twice a week, on Wednesday and Sunday nights. The Bible Study is done in a systematic way and the lessons are prepared by a special committee which draws its members from the village groups.

Once a month there is a combined Bible Study meeting in which the various village group join together, usually on a Saturday evening. This meeting usually takes place in Alefi, but is also held in various villages from time to time. Sometimes during school holidays there is a Bible Study Camp which lasts for a few days. Usually about 80 or 90 young people are present but transport is a great difficulty for many young people who would otherwise be present.

The meetings usually begin with hymn singing — hymns being sung in English and Niuean. After setting aside a time for prayer (usually beginning with 2 or 3 minutes for silent prayer) scripture lessons are read either responsively with the leader or in rotation with each member reading one or two verses. The leader usually makes some comments about the nature of the chapter which has been read and also points out difficulties due to the inadequacies of translation, or sometimes refers to words that have changed in meaning since the days when the scripture were translated into Niuean.

Now the group breaks up into smaller groups with 5 or 6 in each. This is to promote discussion and also to encourage everyone to take part. Each small group has to prepare written answers to set questions. The groups combine again to hear and discuss the report from the small groups and to compare the various answers. After some final comments from the leader the meeting is brought to a close.

The young people seek to apply their study in their ordinary lives and can often be found engaged in some special service. Simple jobs such as cleaning church houses are undertaken by them, and besides this they give their time in various forms of service — helping elderly people, visiting the sick in their villages on Sundays and also visiting the sick in hospital. In these things and in other avenues of service the young people are seeking to find a wholeness of Christian living in which study and devotion lead on to consecrated service.



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